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CHOOSING AN ELECTRIC IRON

Within recent years many new models in electric irons have been designed. Their general shape varies little, but different makes have different features, some of which are valuable. Others do not add greatly to the usefulness of the iron.

The front end of most irons has a narrow point for going around buttons and into gathers. The sides curve out for about 7 inches to a straight heel, a little more than 4 inches wide. It is convenient to have a bracket extension on the heel so the iron can be tipped up on its end when momentarily out of use. The tapering sides, especially if their edges are beveled, enable the user to get into or around odd-shaped parts of garments.

A satisfactory electric iron is well balanced so that it does not dig into the material being ironed. It heats evenly. The handle is of a size and shape that is comfortable to the hand.

A good serviceable electric iron can be bought for between 5 and 9 dollars. On a time-payment plan this cost is somewhat increased. It does not pay to buy any electric equipment offered too cheaply, _____, _____, at _____, says. The manufacturers of well-built articles made of durable materials have to price them accordingly. Electric irons for general use range in weight from 3 1/2 to 6 3/4 pounds.

After making a number of tests, the Virginia agricultural experiment station came to the conclusion that for regular, long-time household ironing

duty, no iron should be considered unless it is thermostatically controlled and has 1,000-watts heating capacity. They also say that the new light-weight irons reduce handling energy considerably over the heavy ones and are entirely satisfactory, because heavy pressure is not necessary in average household ironing.

Formerly, many of the irons with automatic heat control carried only the words "high", "medium", and "low." There are now types with thermostatic control which has a dial with the names of different materials on it arranged in the order of the heat required to iron them, beginning with linen which requires the most. "Linen, cotton, wool, silk, rayon", the dial reads, and a moveable pointer connected with the mechanism concealed in the iron can be set to the correct place on this dial for the fabric on the board. There is also an "OFF" setting on the dial, which makes a very convenient switch.

The bottom of the iron, or soleplate, should be smooth and should heat evenly. Some of the newer irons have the cord attached directly to the iron without a plug. Another innovation is an iron with the wire inserted in the side instead of at the heel. Iron cords, of course, should be of the best possible material, insulated with asbestos beneath the cotton fabric coverings. They should carry the underwriters' guarantee. A rubber plug at the end of the cord that is attached to the service outlet, is good. It can be taken hold of easily without pulling on the cord.

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